TEACH FOR AMERICA IGNITE:

A flexible and rewarding job opportunity

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A highschool classroom in Mesa, Ariz. Tutoring takes place during K-12 school hours, but Teach for America Ignite fellows can choose times that work around their class schedules.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AP

For many college students, finding a job that is manageable with classes and extracurriculars is nearly impossible. Teach For America Ignite is one option that is structured to solve that problem. It is a paid, part time, virtual tutoring fellowship that connects college students with K-12 students.

Ignite is a program part of Teach For America, a national nonprofit known for placing teachers in low-income school districts. Teach For America asks participants to teach full-time for at least two years, but Ignite is a smaller commitment. Fellows for Ignite tutor online for 14 weeks, which is one semester, with support from experienced teachers.

The program is open to students of all majors, and fellows don't need to study education or plan to become teachers. According to Teach For America's website, the experience is meant to build skills in communication, leadership and mentorship that apply to any career path.

Arya Pandya, a seventh-semester marketing major at the University of Connecticut and an Ignite Ambassador, described the teaching content as foundational.

"Very basic math, very basic English is what we teach," she said, but that those short sessions can shape how a student feels about learning and their commitment to coming back. Her sessions run about 30 minutes and happen several times a week.

Fellows complete 10 hours of virtual training during the onboarding process and are matched with an experienced educator who will support them throughout the semester. After that, fellows tutor small groups of students in math, reading or higher education access. Sessions take place on an online platform designed for virtual learning, so there is no commute. A laptop and a quiet place are more than enough to participate.

Fellows work three to five hours per week and commit to attending every session. Tutoring takes place during K-12 school hours, but fellows can choose times that work around their class schedules.

The placement of fellows changes every semester. Fellows are matched with a new group of students, sometimes at a different school, and they are not allowed to contact students after the term ends. Pandya said even despite the short window real bonds form, with students who are reluctant at the start often feeling sad when the semester comes to an end.

Fellows receive $1,000 per semester at the end of the term. There are two $100 bonuses; one for perfect attendance and one if a fellow returns for another semester.

Ignite also offers a path into the Teach for America Corps. Fellows who complete one semester of Ignite are fast-tracked to the final interview if they decide to apply.

Teach for America also allows fellows to support children and families facing systematic barriers and the ability to collaborate with people from different backgrounds.

Pandya joined Ignite as a transfer student before becoming a campus ambassador. She said the most rewarding part of the job has been seeing the impact of relationships on learning.

"Progress isn't always about getting the right answer immediately," she said. "Sometimes, it's a student feeling comfortable enough to ask a question, trying again after getting something wrong or becoming more confident in their own abilities."

The work has also shaped how she thinks about her own major and work. As a marketing major, she is used to thinking about audiences and messaging. Tutoring added a more personal point-of-view to that. "When a student doesn't understand a concept the first time, you have to listen, adjust and find another way to explain it", Arya explained.

"Communicating effectively isn't just about explaining something well," she said. "It's about understanding the person you're communicating with."

She also said that explaining ideas to young students made her a stronger communicator in general, because it forced her to break complex ideas into simple terms. She added that Ignite made her value her own education more.

Applications are for the fellowship due Wednesday, Nov. 18. Students can apply through the Ignite page on the Teach For America website, at teachforamerica.org/ignite, which provides more details on the process.

BUNDLE UP, BUT DON'T DRESS DOWN

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Whether you're new to colder seasons in Connecticut or have been facing them as long as you've been alive, there's no denying the brutality of the conditions.

As the weather gets colder, it's easy to lose the excitement style brings when your biggest concerns are somewhere between an exam on Friday and finding the quickest route to class without risking hypothermia.

Although the season for snow boots and heavy coats may seem far, it's actually closer than we think — way closer. If you plan on hauling your winter wardrobe back to campus after Thanksgiving, then it is important to understand one thing: dressing for the worst does not mean sacrificing the best.

Here are a few simple ways to stay stylish, yet snug for the colder seasons.



Maxi and chunky knit scarves are a major statement accessory for winter layering, blending oversized comfort with bold street style. Thick winter scarves provide essential cold-weather insulation and come in various styles.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @STARCROSSED.KNITS ON INSTAGRAM

Baggy jeans are a strength

Many of us belong to a generation that believes the bigger the jeans, the better the outfit. Why not use that to your advantage?

The style allows you to hide thick base layers underneath without compromising your look. So, when a cold day comes around (which is inevitable) use the opportunity to wear a pair of fleece-lined leggings underneath some baggy jeans. When you step outside dressed for the "feels-like" temperature instead of the actual forecast, trust me, you won't regret it!

Scarves are your friends

I cannot stress enough how important it is to keep your neck covered when the temperature drops. By wearing a scarf, you can prevent warm air from escaping your body and making your trip to class feel 10 times longer.

A good scarf can be the perfect accessory for a winter outfit, and there's many silhouettes that can complement the look you might be going for.

Chunky scarves with various patterns are a great way to brighten things up and tie everything together. If you don't believe me, I suggest searching "chunky scarf outfits" on Pinterest. It will confirm that scarves remain a constant winter staple.

Headphones or earmuffs — why not both?

When we look good, we feel good. When we feel good, we do good.

As college students, music is a huge part of how we feel throughout the day. I can even go as far as saying music is something a lot of us simply couldn't live without. For some, it might soften the blow of having to get up for an 8 a.m. class. For others, it's an essential part of what is known as 'romanticizing' the day.

Regardless, it is widely understood that leaving headphones behind is simply a non-negotiable — especially when preparing for the biting chill that will accompany the spring semester. The good news is, if you already own a pair of noise canceling headphones that cover your outer ear, then there's no need to purchase ear muffs!



Earmuffs are wearable devices designed to cover the ears for cold-weather warmth. Earmuffs typically feature a band that fits over or behind the head with soft cushions or protective cups on each end.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @AMAZONFASHION ON INSTAGRAM

When in doubt, layer!

We're all familiar with the concept of layering; at one point or another, we've all been told to put on a jacket before leaving the house.

But layering is more than just wearing temporary protection; it's ensuring that you stay warm the entire day. Instead of throwing a coat over your usual outfit and hoping for the best, dress in three distinct layers.

The base includes all the tight-fitting pieces that prevent sweat and maintain warmth. Preventing damp skin is pivotal during the colder seasons, as it avoids rapid cooling.

The mid-layer will serve as your insulation. Think of knit sweaters, long sleeves, thick sweatpants or a warm fleece. The more layers you wear underneath, the warmer you'll be without having to bury your outfit under heavy outerwear.

Finally, the outer layer; this is the part of your outfit that comes into direct contact with the elements outside, so it's important to own a jacket that can accommodate the clothing beneath it. Wind is also a huge thing here at the University of Connecticut, so don't hesitate to wear a larger jacket if needed — bonus points if it has pockets.

There are many ways to enjoy the upcoming season, and a warm outfit will create the ability to enjoy festivities on campus without them feeling like a hassle.

Wear all the fun colors, bundle up and take photos. The most wonderful time of the year is almost here, so make the most of it!